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conclusions which he sets forth will be entitled always to an unusual consideration.

Some ground for criticism and a few defects do not destroy the value of a comprehensive treatise. These two volumes stand the fundamental test of general reliability, and they will without doubt take high rank as constituting a trustworthy and scholarly exposition of those rules of law which bind the member states of international society in their intercourse one with another.

ELLERY C. STOWELL.

*Le Langage: Introduction Linguistique à l'Histoire.* Par J. VENDRYES, Professeur à l'Université de Paris. [L'Évolution de l'Humanité, Synthèse Collective, dirigée par Henri Berr.] (Paris: La Renaissance du Livre. 1921. Pp. xxviii, 439. 15 fr.)

WHY include a book on language in a series on "The Evolution of Humanity"? Because, says M. Vendryes (p. 1): "Language is both an instrument and an aid of thought. It is language that has enabled man to become conscious of himself and to communicate with his fellows—that has made possible the establishment of societies." Human society and human thought, in their higher forms at least, would have been impossible without language, which is not only an "instrument of thought" but, according to M. Henri Berr ("Avant-propos", p. xvii), "a factor of society". Not, he adds, "a product of society" as maintained by the school of Durkheim. But M. Berr recognizes, too, that society "exercises a pressure (*une pression*)" upon language. He would apparently agree that, whether originally a "factor" or a "product" of society, language has been at all historic periods both. Similarly as to language and thought—perhaps men *can* think in non-linguistic terms; but they seldom do so. And their thoughts are unconsciously but profoundly affected by the forms of language in which they can hardly avoid clothing them—both their thoughts, and (consequently) their actions.<sup>1</sup> That language, on the other hand, is also influenced by thought, is equally clear. These reciprocal relations between language and man's intellectual and social life seem enough to justify, for a historian, an examination of the nature of language, as a tool of man.

M. Vendryes divides his book into five main parts: I. Sounds, II. Grammar, III. Vocabulary, IV. Constitution of Languages, V. Writing. The last three seem to me the best; they are also the parts of most general interest. Part III. treats of why and how words change their meanings, and concepts change their names. The historic and social importance of language-study appears most clearly here and in part IV.,

<sup>1</sup> Think of the power of "catch-words" and of "calling names" (without regard to facts) in determining men's actions, to mention but one instance—a very simple one, but of far-reaching social importance. "The word is not only a key; it may also be a fetter." E. Sapir, *Language* (New York, 1921), p. 17.

which treats of what constitutes "languages" (*les langues*) as distinguished from "language" (*le langage*), of dialects, "special languages" (those peculiar to one trade, caste, sex, religious group, etc.), *argots*, contact and mixture of languages, and finally the comparative method of language-study, which, despite its drawbacks, is a necessary substitute for the historic method when historic data are wanting. Part V. contains *inter alia* a brief but good history of writing, a conservative discussion of the simplified-spelling question, and a treatment of the influence of writing on spoken language, the importance of which is often underestimated.

The more technical parts I. and II. are disappointing. They contain little that tends to clarify our ideas or advance our knowledge on these subjects, which are, indeed, as difficult as they are important for the linguist. For instance, there is an element of truth in the fundamental distinction made (p. 86), among grammatical concepts, between "seman-temes", elements of [concrete] meaning, and "morphemes", formal elements. (The distinction is handled better by Sapir—see note 1—in his fifth chapter.) But the author fails to apply his terms in accordance with his own definitions. He includes among "morphemes" *all* endings and affixes, articles and (at least the French) pronouns, and numerous other words and grammatical devices, many of which express concrete ideas, and not merely "relations between ideas", which is what he says "morphemes" express. Despite this definition, he evidently thinks of a "morpheme" at times as any element that is inseparable from another element in speech. Of course these two definitions are utterly irreconcilable; and the (seemingly unconscious) blending of them leads to sad confusion.

The concluding section on Progress in Language is also confused and confusing. We get no clear idea of the grounds on which Jespersen argued that languages do "progress". If, as Jespersen maintained, (1) the synthetic and inflecting principles of, *e.g.*, Greek and Latin, are logically inferior to the analytic and isolating principles of Chinese and English; and (2) all languages tend to develop from the former stage toward the latter, and to discard logically useless formal elements—then the historical development of language is a process of logical improvement. Both points are, no doubt, disputable; but at least it seems to me that Jespersen has made clear the sole grounds on which the question of "progress" in language can be argued. Vendryes is too much pre-occupied with various aesthetic and other considerations, which have no real bearing on the subject—even if we could accept as scientific fact such curious romanticism as the paean in praise of the Greek language on pp. 405 ff., which I can hardly reconcile with the following paragraph in which the author very sanely says that it would be "ridiculous to try to prove [on aesthetic grounds] that the language used by Homer . . . is inferior or superior to that of Shakespeare".

Much better is the introduction, on the Origin of Language. It is profoundly true, though it may seem paradoxical, that "the origin of language is not a linguistic problem" (p. 6). The data accessible to the linguist fail utterly to throw light upon it, as our author makes clear. It must be left to the speculative psychologists. Psychological and not linguistic in basis are the suggestions adopted (tentatively and hesitantly) by M. Vendryes.

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#### BOOKS OF MEDIEVAL AND MODERN EUROPEAN HISTORY

*An Introduction to the History of Christianity, A. D. 590-1314.* By F. J. FOAKES JACKSON, Professor of Christian Institutions in Union Theological Seminary, New York. (New York: Macmillan Company. 1921. Pp. xi, 390. \$4.00.)

DR. FOAKES JACKSON, feeling that the Middle Ages have not received of late the attention they deserve, has written an introduction to the history of Latin Christendom from the accession of Gregory the Great to the death of Clement V. in the hope of stimulating further interest. The volume opens with a chapter on the Pillars of the Medieval Church, a cross-section of Western Christendom in the sixth century, when the characteristics of the Middle Ages were already apparent. "Monasticism and the papacy," we are told, "were the corner-stones of the medieval system." There are disadvantages attached to the application of architectural terminology to a living, growing organism; but, if pillars and corner-stones we must have, better than these can be found. A sounder judgment is that of Dr. Kirsopp Lake: "From the end of the second century to the sixteenth the Christian Church was supported by three pillars, belief in the Logos-Son, Baptism, and the Mass" (*Harvard Theological Review*, XV. 106).

Of the other thirteen chapters, seven, not consecutive, are devoted to the history of the papacy. Chapter IV. gives a useful description of the organization of the church by provinces and dioceses. There is a chapter on Learning and Heresy; another on the Church as a Disciplinary Institution; and a third on the Friars, the Schoolmen, and the Universities. A number of interesting and important matters are touched upon in the chapter called a Survey of Society. The last chapter, Dante and the Decay of Medievalism, is in the main a résumé of the *Divine Comedy*.

Dr. Foakes Jackson finds much that is good to say of the medieval Church. It was "the only institution from which any hope of a regenerated world could be expected" (p. 65) and its corruption has been exaggerated (p. 84). It was for the good of the world that in his own day, at any rate, Gregory VII.'s cause should prevail (p. 143). The crusades, so far from being a monstrous example of folly, were an attempt to solve one of to-day's problems, the question of the settlement of the